

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

received

date entered

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections**1. Name**

historic GRANT PARK STADIUM

and or common SOLDIER FIELD

2. Location

street & number 425 East 14th Street not for publication

city, town Chicago vicinity of

state Illinois code county Cook code 60605

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Chicago Park District

street & number 425 East McFetridge Drive

city, town Chicago vicinity of state Illinois 60605

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Chicago Park District

street & number 425 East McFetridge Drive

city, town Chicago state Illinois 60605

6. Representation in Existing Surveystitle Historical Register of the Twenty-Two
Superseded Park Districts has this property been determined eligible? yes nodate 1941 federal state county local

depository for survey records Chicago Park District, 425 East McFetridge Drive

city, town Chicago state Illinois 60605

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Soldier Field is located in Burnham Park south of 14th Street between the north and south bound lanes of Lake Shore Drive. The stadium's classical revival language recalls the proper images of the Greek Doric order, even though the building is reinforced concrete in structure and architectural detail. The building sits on two flat terraces, the level of the ground at the north about 15 feet higher than that of the south.

Soldier Field is 1375' x 350' and drawing direct inspiration from the ancient form, is "U" shaped in plan. Its axis is north/south with a semi-circular spandome or theater, in the south. The axis, intended to align with that of the Field Museum, was severed in 1939 when the Park District Headquarters was built abutting the stadium on the north. To assure the compatibility of old and new the same architects designed the Park District Headquarters.

Originally, around the interior face of the "U", on a 26° slope, was open-air benches for 55,000 spectators -- an additional 45,000 seats could be provided on tiers above the theater and across the north end although as many as 100,000 have been accommodated. Individual chairs have replaced many of the benches.

The seating focuses on a flat field at one time surrounded by a running track. Direct access to the field from outside was provided at four locations. There are 44 gates for spectators. Currently set up for football games, a stand has been installed within the last two years across the stadium's mid-section to increase visibility. This seating configuration is not in congruent with the architect's original intentions although the details of the stand's construction are unsympathetic to the building's historic qualities.

The playing field has been abandoned in the north, usurped for Park District employee parking, and in the south a synthetic turf has replaced the grass lawn regraded in 1935. Originally, processions descended on an easy slope from 14th Street, went along the west side of the field to a reviewing stand in the theater, then proceeded along the east side of the field back to 14th Street.

Underneath the stadium's seating on three levels, are 125,000 square feet of ancillary spaces: ticket wickets, offices, concessions, dressing rooms, showers, rest rooms, power equipment supply, and storage. Notable are two 35 feet high halls with Ionic columns. The extensive open floor space was envisioned for automobile, livestock, dairy, industrial and other exhibitions. A swimming pool, recreation rooms and a gymnasium were considered early in the planning, and the interior arrangement provided for shops along the boulevard planned at the east. Sadly, the stadium's multi purpose potential remains unfulfilled to this day.

The exterior facade of Soldier Field is well preserved. At the theater, there are rhythmic elevations, three stories high and eight bays wide. The base has a simple wainscot and is separated from the wall's middle zone by an unprofiled stringcourse. There are two rectangular windows per bay except in the central bay where there is a doorway with a Doric surround. The middle zone is plain consisting of one rectangular window per bay except over the doorway. Crowning the wall is a simple cornice and an unadorned frieze surmounted by a blocky unballustrated parapet. On top the parapet are three evenly spaced plinths originally supporting decorative bronze lighting standards. These have been replaced by painted steel, industrial light poles. Between each plinth, mounted on the face of the parapet are straps for flagpoles. Each elevation is separated from another by single bay pavilions punctuated at the base by a doorway with a rectangular window above. On top of each pavilion is a pedestal complete with cornice, dado and base supporting unimaginative flood lights which have replaced the original ornate bronze standards.

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Because Soldier Field's ground level is higher in the north, the exterior walls facing east and west are only two stories high. Here the repeating elevations consist of four bays each with a square window over a rectangular window. The elevations have a plain base moulding, an upper wall matching that of the theater, and are flanked by doorways with a Doric surround.

The most distinctive architectural feature of Soldier Field is the pair of systyle Doric colonnades, aerially perched along the east and west sides. Each colonnade, flanked by tetrastyle temples, is formed by a double row of 32 columns. The temple's central intercolumniation is ditriglyphic. This grand ensemble rests on the canonical three steps visually functioning as the entablature for the wall below. Each column, 32'-10 1/2" high, has twenty flutes, a proportion of 1:5 1/4 and is without entasis. Between the columns are railings supported on cross-braced posts punctuated with patera. The colonnade's entablature has a plain architrave and metopes with round shields surrounded by a guilloche. Flood lights are creatively inserted in the metopes facing the playing field. Uncreatively, two story press and box seats were installed last year masking the faces of both colonnades on the field side. The pediments originally sported anthemion acroteria, which have since been taken down — only their bases remain. A staircase on the stadium's exterior leads up from the ground to each temple and another more monumental staircase, now obscured, leads down toward the playing field.

Under the colonnades, the exterior walls of Soldier Field are particularly elaborate compared to the other elevations. Set forward from the plane of the colonnade is a one-story base with five doorways. There are rectangular windows aside each doorway, a wainscot and a denticulated cornice. Directly underneath the colonnade are five sets of three rectangular windows. Each temple sits on a lofty projecting pavilion with a wainscot, doorway, denticulated string course, a rectangular window with pilasters supporting an entablature, and across the top, six gorgon shields. A summary of alterations in respect to Soldier Field's historical integrity follows. (Most of these alterations were carried out over the last three years and in 1971.)

Exterior - The exterior of the building remains as originally constructed except for the replacement of the bronze lighting standards and the removal of the acroteria. Many of the acroteria have been discovered at the edge of Lake Michigan at 31st Street, thrown in as "shore protection" where pounding waves are eroding the sharp profiles.

Interior - most of the changes to Soldier Field have been made on the interiors: at the stadium's mid-section a concrete and steel stand was built completing the ellipse of the spectator seating; two story enclosed box seating was installed across the faces of both colonnades; the wooden benches were replaced by colorful permanently affixed individual chairs; seating was installed on the stairways leading to the pavilions; and the grass surface of the field was replaced by a synthetic carpet.

Underneath the stands - few changes have been made. Only new exit ramps, elevators and lighting have been installed.

In conclusion, although Soldier Field has suffered from insensitive alterations and accretions on the inside, happily most of these are reversible. The exterior is well preserved, remains intact, serving without disruption of the original images envisioned by the architects.

8. Significance

Period	Area of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Recreation

Specific dates 1923 - 1925 **Builder/Architect** Holabird & Roche
H. J. Burt Consulting Engineer

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Soldier Field, originally called Grant Park Stadium, has been an important Lake Front recreational facility and a prominent element in the fabric of the City of Chicago ever since opening day. It is the sister to Navy Pier, official dedicated to World War I soldiers by the South Park Commissioners on August 19, 1925. Architecturally, the stadium is a "pioneer example of the circular multipurpose stadia",⁽¹⁾ designed to embody civic pride and to be flexibly adaptable for public gatherings. Of the many events conducted in the stadium, three were internationally well known: the Twenty-eighth International Eucharistic Congress held in 1926; the Dempsey-Tunney Fight a year later, and the special ceremonies for a Century of Progress, 1933 and 1934. Benignly neglected and underutilized in the 50s and 60s, Soldier Field was reborn in the 1970s when the Chicago Bears football team began to call it home. Historically, it is not necessarily important that one single sports team has been identified with the stadium because originally it was designed to be "all purpose".... having the unusual feature of providing for large parades, pageants, military maneuvers, concerts and outdoor winter sports".⁽²⁾

"The great....Stadium-Soldier Field....has been built as was the Parthenon, or the Coliseum of Rome, to endure through the ages. Perpetuating the memory of Chicago's sons who made the supreme sacrifice in the World War, it symbolizes in its classic architecture, in its beauty and its strength, the youth and courage and the will to win - the spirit of the city's young manhood of 1917."⁽³⁾

Architecturally, Soldier Field's classical revival style is a melding of Greek forms with modern, machine age construction technology. The stadium embodies a systematic application of a sophisticated understanding of ancient buildings. This application couples with contemporary reinforced concrete engineering practice to effect the desired references to history, nobility and dignity. Soldier Field's ancestors are in Greece, sculpted into the hillsides at Delphi, Epidaurus, Nemea, Olympia, Samothrace and Rhodes where sacred games were held to honor the gods. Details were "carved" from reinforced concrete called Benedict Stone. Its Doric order is directly borrowed from the 5th Century B.C. Propylaea by Mnesicles and the Parthenon by Ictinus in Athens. Indeed, the Parthenon's columns are only 2' taller than Soldier Field's and have the same proportions. At the time of construction the colonnades were described as the largest in the world.

A Grant Park stadium was first recommended by Daniel H. Burnham in his famous Plan of 1909. Labeled "Athletic Grounds" in the Plan, the stadium site was at the time a watery shoal adjacent to an intensively industrial shoreline utilized by the Illinois Central Railroad. The stadium and its special location within a public park is a manifestation of visionary advocacy by politicians and other governmental officials. This democratic activism, was an effort to establish the concepts of the City Beautiful Movement.

Through arduously unprecedented legislative efforts at the Federal, state and city levels, the South Park Commissioners were finally permitted to create Burnham's vision for an Athletic Ground. Between 1917 and 1924 excavated construction material was dumped on the site carried, for most part, from the Loop. The landfill was provided free of charge by the Chicago Tunnel Company whose 60 mile system (functioning until 1956) laced downtown serving the mercantile community by transporting goods, mail, equipment, coal and cinders. A special spur line was built east of 13th Street to west of the Field Museum where a large shaft was sunk and two elevators were installed to bring the loaded cars to the surface. The cars were then towed over temporary tracks to the site of the stadium.

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Most of the land was already in place in the spring of 1919 when the South Park Commissioners held a competition for the Stadium's design. Rules, based on American Institute of Architects' guidelines and a program were drawn up by Dwight H. Perkins, Architectural Advisor to the Commissioners. The program called for an arena, not less than 1,000 feet with a 1/3 mile running track, for processions, pageants, military maneuvers, concerts, outdoor dramatics, athletic contests, track meets, horse shows, fairs, winter sports, ice carnivals and bicycle races.

Six architectural firms were asked by the Commissioners to submit schemes: Edward H. Bennett, Coolidge & Hodgdon, Holabird and Roche, Zachary T. Davis, Jarvis Hunt, and Marshall & Fox. The members of the jury were selected for their particular qualifications: Martin A. Ryerson, Vice President of the Art Institute, J. Frank Foster, Superintendent of the South Park System, A. A. Stagg, Director of Athletics at the University of Chicago, Richard E. Schmidt, Architect of Schmidt, Garden & Martin, and Pierce Anderson, Architect of Graham, Anderson Probst and White. All of the entrants, except Holabird and Roche, drew inspiration from round contemporary collegiate bowls such as the reinforced concrete Palmer Stadium at Princeton, in a Tudor style for 42,000 and at Yale for 70,000. The Yale Bowl (1914) was proclaimed the largest in the world and the most perfect place at that time for athletics and exhibitions. Interestingly, the Marshall and Fox proposal was for a very Roman coliseum.

On December 1, 1919, Holabird and Roche were announced the winners receiving the \$5,000 prize. The architectural firm of Holabird & Root were prolific and nationally influential architects within the Chicago School and "if Chicago deserves its appellation of 'America's most architectural city'", then this firm deserves a large amount of the credit....⁽⁴⁾ The building was to cost between \$2 million and \$4 million, was the only "U" shaped design submitted and was to seat 100,000. In the written statement that accompanied their six drawings, the firm outlined two purposes: (1) the proposed stadium was not to conflict with the Field Museum, and (2) the majority of permanent seats should be concentrated around a comparatively small area, to afford the greatest number the best view of those athletic games and similar events as could not be expected to fill the stadium to capacity. Significantly different from the other entrants was the provision for a monumental obelisk above the theater to the soldiers of the Great War. This grand expression and others presented in the winning plan were never carried out in the final design. International attention was focused on Chicago when the plan was published in England's The Architect magazine.

Eighteen months after the winner was announced, the first construction contract was awarded to the Blome Sinek Company of Chicago and New York. When opened to the public in 1926 Soldier Field was among the largest in all the world. Notable american stadiums of similar rank from this period include the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, Ohio State, Cornell's Crescent, Franklin Field in Philadelphia and at other universities at Tulane, Kansas, Dallas, Harvard and Miami, Florida. Typologically, Soldier Field's distinctive characteristic is its "U" shape, having parallel sides (i.e. not arranged in a horseshoe).

In conclusion, Soldier Field is, as originally envisioned, an "architectural monument....(and an) artistic asset in the Chicago Plan".⁽⁵⁾ On the horizon are threats to its continued existence, including suggestions to dome the playing field and the proposed World's Fair in 1992. Soldier Field, always a source of civic pride, seems to stand ready to serve more activity in Chicago's urban scene, but in a historically respectable manner.

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Continuation sheet Significance Item number 8 Page 2

- (1) Carl Condit, Chicago 1910-29, Building Planning and Urban Technology 1973 p. 149.
- (2) _____, "Chicago Building Huge Public Stadium in Lakefront" Engineering News-Record, February 15, 1923.
- (3) From a Chicago guide book in 1932 recorded in Harold M. Mayer and Richard C. Wade, Chicago, Growth of a Metropolis 1969, p. 298.
- (4) Robert Bruegmann, "Holabird & Roche and Holabird & Root: The First Two Generations", Chicago History, Fall 1980.
- (5) _____. "Art in Chicago". The American Magazine of Art Vol XI No. 4
(February 1920).

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Attached

10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property 7 acres

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References

A

Zone	Eastings	Northing

B

Zone	Eastings	Northing

C

Zone	Eastings	Northing

D

Zone	Eastings	Northing

E

Zone	Eastings	Northing

F

Zone	Eastings	Northing

G

Zone	Eastings	Northing

H

Zone	Eastings	Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property occupies that section of Burnham Park between the Chicago Park District Administration Building, Waldron Drive, and the north and south bound lanes of Lake Shore Drive. The nominated property is approximately 1375' x 350'.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kevin Lee Sarring, A. I. A. Architect

organization Harry Weese & Associates date December 20, 1982
Supplemented 1/26/83, Rev. 7/29/83

street & number 10 West Hubbard telephone (312) 467-7030

city or town Chicago state Illinois 60610

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

title _____ date _____

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date _____

Keeper of the National Register _____

Attest:

date _____

Chief of Registration _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Continuation sheet Major Bibliographical References Item number 9 Page 1

- _____. "Announce Prize-Winning Firm in Chicago Arena Competition". The American Architect Vol. CXVI No. 2293 (December 3, 1919).
- _____. "Art in Chicago". The American Magazine of Art Vol. XI No. 4 (February 1920).
- _____. "A Stadium for All Chicago, Holabird & Roche, Architects". The Western Architect Vol. 29 No. 1 (January 1920).
- Bruegmann, Robert. "Holabird & Roche and Holabird & Root: The First Two Generations". Chicago History IX No. 3, (Fall 1980).
- Burnham, Daniel H. and Bennett, Edward H. Plan of Chicago. Chicago: Commercial Club, 1909.
- _____. "Chicago Building Huge Public Stadium on Lake Front". Engineering News-Record, (February 15, 1923).
- _____. "Competition for a Stadium on the Lake Front, Chicago". The American Architect Vol. CXVII No. 2304 (February 18, 1920) and No. 2306 (March 3, 1920).
- Condit, Carl. Chicago 1910-29 Building, Planning and Urban Technology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973.
- Green, Lloyd and Burton, Thomas. "Civic Groups Wary of Dome for Solider Field." Chicago Sun-Times (April 21, 1982).
- Holabird & Roche Drawing Collection. The Chicago Historical Society.
- Mendelsohn, Felix, publisher. Chicago and Its Makers. Chicago, 1929.
- Moffat, Bruce. Forty Feet Below, the Story of Chicago's Freight Tunnels. Glendale California: Interurban Press, 1982.
- Reed, Earl H., Jr. "Some Recent Work of Holabird and Root, Architects". Architecture 61, (January 1930).
- Robertson, D. S. Greek and Roman Architecture. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971.
- Serby, Myron W. The Stadium, a Treatise on the Design of Stadiums and their Equipment. 1930.
- _____. Selected Photographs Illustrating the Work of Holabird & Roche Architects, Chicago 1882-1925. Chicago, 1925.
- _____. "Stadium for Chicago South Park" The Architect Vol. C111-2672 (March 12, 1920).
- Woodbury, William H. Grandstand and Stadium Design. New York, 1947.
- Works Project Administration. Historical Register of the Twenty-Two Superseded Park Districts. Chicago, 1941.



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

AUG 14 1984

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to inform you that the following properties have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places beginning August 5, 1984 and ending August 11, 1984. For further information call (202) 343-9552.

STATE, County, Vicinity, Property, Address, (Date Listed)

ALABAMA, Jefferson County, Birmingham, Windham Construction Company Office Building, 528 8th Ave. N. (08/09/84)

ALABAMA, Perry County, Uniontown, Pitts' Folly, Old Cahaba Rd. (08/09/84)

DELAWARE, New Castle County, Middletown vicinity, Pharo House, Odessa and Silver Lake Rds. (08/09/84)

DELAWARE, New Castle County, Odessa, Odessa Historic District (Boundary Increase), Roughly Main and High Sts. between Appoquinimink River and DE 4 (08/09/84)

DELAWARE, New Castle County, Wilmington, Shipley Run Historic District, Roughly bounded by Adams, 11th, Jefferson, and 7th Sts. (08/09/84)

DELAWARE, Sussex County, Bridgeville, Old Bridgeville Fire House, 102 William St. (08/09/84)

IDAHO, Adams/Idaho/Nez Perce Counties, Hells Canyon Archeological District, Both sides of Snake River from Hells Canyon Dam to Cougar Rapids (08/10/84)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Soldier Field, 425 E. 14th St. (08/09/84)

INDIANA, Shelby County, Shelbyville, Shelbyville Commercial Historic District, Roughly bounded by Broadway, Tompkins, Mechanic, and Noble Sts. (08/09/84)

MARYLAND, Anne Arundel County, Annapolis, Helianthus III (yacht), Hilton Inn dock (08/09/84)

MARYLAND, Anne Arundel County, Crofton vicinity, Linthicum Walks, 2295 Davidsonville Rd. (08/09/84)

MARYLAND, Montgomery County, Gaithersburg, Belt, J.A., Building, 227 E. Diamond Ave. (08/09/84)

MARYLAND, Somerset County, Manokin vicinity, Waters' River, Hood Rd. (08/09/84)

MARYLAND, Somerset County, Marion vicinity, Lankford House, MD 667 (08/09/84)

MARYLAND, Somerset County, Rehobeth vicinity, Coventry Parish Ruins, Off MD 667 (08/09/84)

MARYLAND, Somerset County, Westover vicinity, Beauchamp House, Old Westover-Marion Rd. (08/09/84)

MARYLAND, Talbot County, Wye Mills, Old Wye Church, Queenstown-Easton Rd. (08/09/84)

MINNESOTA, Hennepin County, Minneapolis, Bardwell-Ferrant House, 2500 Portland Ave. S. (08/09/84)

MINNESOTA, Meeker County, Litchfield vicinity, Ames, Henry, House, MN 24 (08/09/84)

MINNESOTA, Winona County, Rollingstone, Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Rollingstone Rd. and MN 25 (08/09/84)

MINNESOTA, Winona County, St. Charles, St. Charles City Bakery, 501 Whitewater Ave. (08/09/84)

MINNESOTA, Winona County, St. Charles, Trinity Episcopal Church, 805 St. Charles Ave. (08/09/84)

MINNESOTA, Winona County, St. Charles, Whitewater Avenue Commercial Historic District, 900-1012 Whitewater Ave. (08/09/84)